Habitat

The Tahltan claim very considerable area of country in the Cassiar district of British Columbia, the southern extremity of their territories touching latitude 56 and the northern extremity latitude 60. East and west their country extends from the Cascade to the Cassiar Range. The upper Stikine may be called the center of their territory. They control all the drainage basin of this river and only in a few places do they extend beyond to some of the neighboring feeders of the waters of the Taku, Nass, Skeena, Mackenzie and Yukon Rivers. 131

Characteristics of the Country

The region occupied by the Tahltan is of a semi-mountainous and semi-forested character. There are extensive areas of plateau and rolling country lightly timbered or for the most part open. As the timber line is low in this latitude and much of the country is equal in elevation to or above the timber line a great deal of country (all the higher parts) is almost devoid of timber. The lower plateaux and valleys are generally well timbered with trees of medium and small size - although nowhere growing thickly as on the Coast, nor is there anywhere much under brush as in the latter region. Many of the upper valleys are grassy or mossy in character and have very little timber. Moss is plentiful both in the open country and in the forests, and muskegs are often to be met with. The slopes of the hills and mountains, especially in the more easterly and westerly parts of the country, are often steep and rocky. The country as a whole shows much signs of erosion and in some places its nature is volcanic. The valley of the Stikine River, commencing immediately east of the Cascades for a distance of some forty miles, is drier than the rest of the country and resembles a good deal in appearance and flora some valleys further south in the Dry Belt of British Columbia. /To the/ west, in the Cascade or Coast mountains, where the Stikine and other streams pierce the range, the country assumes a different appearance, becoming very mountainous and rocky; glaciers and snow fields abound, and the lower valleys become gorge-like in character, with heavy timber and underbrush where the soil is not too rocky. Here the climate becomes cooler, and proceeding westwards the rainfall and snow fall become heavier and heavier. 133 137 133 134 [137] 132